

ened in from two to three weeks after death, that a tolerably exact anatomical examination becomes impossible, a fact which is of serious importance in the case of bodies not discovered at an early period, and where death is supposed to have resulted from drowning or hanging.

9. The *heart* is slow to putrefy; it will often be found quite fresh when the intestinal canal is considerably advanced in putrefaction. It softens gradually, the *columnæ carnæ* first, and becomes brittle and of a greenish gray colour, like all the organs.

10. The *lungs* show signs of decomposition about the same time as the heart, sometimes sooner. In bodies which have already attained the highest degree of putrefaction, as seen in the separation of the cuticle, dark-green colour, strongly offensive odour, &c., the lungs will often be found perfectly well preserved. This undeniable fact forms a powerful argument against the theoretical objections made by some to the value of the hydrostatic lung-test. For when the lungs of a new-born child, whose body is still fresh, or only beginning to putrefy, are found to swim upon the surface of the water, the abstract objection that their buoyancy may be due to putrefaction, is contradicted by anatomical experience, which shows that the lungs are not attacked by putrefaction at such an early period. The first traces of this process in the lungs, is seen in vesicles from the size of a millet-seed to that of a bean, caused by the formation of gas under the pleura; these are so easy of recognition as to constitute a perfectly simple diagnostic sign of the occurrence of putrefaction, and to explain the cause of the buoyancy of the lungs. These vesicles are at first isolated and single; they gradually, however, increase in number until the whole lobe, and particularly the inferior surface of the lower lobe of each lung is thickly sown with them. With the progress of decomposition the lung becomes soft, of a dark colour, and loses its consistence.

11—14. The *kidneys*, *urinary bladder*, *oesophagus*, and *pancreas*, are said to succeed each other very nearly in the order in which they are here arranged.

15. The *uterus* resists putrefaction longer than any of the organs here mentioned. The importance of this fact in cases where pregnancy is alleged to have existed at the time of death, was illustrated in a case examined by Dr. Casper, in which, although the greater part of the body had been converted into adipose, and the bones were loosened from their attachment, the uterus was found perfectly fresh and firm. (For an abridgment of this case, vid. *Am. Journ. Med. Sci.*, July, 1852, p. 269.) The same is true at the earliest age. It is not without importance even then, since, as the author observes, in Berlin, the bodies of new-born children which have been thrown into privy wells, sewers, or buried in cellars or gardens, are often not found for a long time after death, and when the organs generally are so much decomposed as to be no longer recognizable. In such cases the *uterus* was found in a state of preservation.—*Gerichtliche Leichen-Oeffnungen. Zweites Hundert*, Berlin, 1853.

60. *Suicidal Suffocation*.—An artillery soldier, under treatment in hospital, destroyed himself by thrusting a linen compress in his throat. He was under the close observation of a special attendant, having attempted two days before to commit suicide by throwing himself out of a window. Medical aid, although speedily obtained, was too late to be of use.—*Prag Vierteljahrsst.*, 1853, 2 Bd. p. 111.

61. *Mistaken Personal Identity*.—Dr. KINLOCK, of Drumoak, Aberdeenshire, relates a case of mistaken identity under extraordinary circumstances. The body of a man between sixty and seventy years of age, was found slightly imbedded in the sand, on the bank of a river; both eyes had been picked out by hooded crows, but decomposition had made no progress. The left ear, and the first finger of the left hand were wanting, having the appearance of having been lost in early life. The body was conveyed to a suitable place, and persons were requested by advertisements to come and identify it. After some time, two young women claimed it as the body of their father, who, they stated, was a lawyer; that he was in the habit of leaving home for two or three weeks at a time without informing them where he went, and that he had

lost the left ear and first finger of his left hand. They apparently recognized the clothes and the body, and gave vent to expressions of grief on the event. Subsequent doubts in the mind of one sister were overruled by the confident affirmations of the other. The funeral took place accordingly, and was attended by the daughters and friends of the supposed deceased lawyer. Returning from the funeral, the boatman of the ferry which they had to cross asked them for whom they were in mourning, and upon receiving their answer, laughingly informed them that he had, only half an hour before, ferried their father over alive and well, and directed them where they would find him; which, to their great joy, proved to be true. Whose was the body they had buried in the churchyard at Drumoak has not been discovered.—*Brit. and For. Med.-Chir. Rev.* from *Edinburgh Monthly Journal*, February, 1854.

62. *Recovery after taking a large Dose of Prussic Acid.*—Mr. W. H. BURNAM, of Wath-upon-Dearne, has communicated to the *Lancet* a very interesting history of the recovery of his father from accidental poisoning by prussic acid. The following abstract is from the *Brit. and For. Med.-Chir. Rev.*, April of this year. Mr. Burnam, Sr., took by mistake a drachm of Scheele's acid instead of diluted acid. In a few seconds, he perceived by the bottle the mistake he had made; he immediately swallowed half an ounce of aromatic spirit of ammonia, with a little water, and then called to his son and told him what had occurred. He spoke hurriedly, and breathed deeply. Mr. W. H. Burnam immediately administered some solution of crystals of sulphate of iron, trusting to the ammonia previously swallowed for the formation of an insoluble compound of the acid with the oxides of iron. This was two minutes after the poison had been swallowed; from this time, for twenty minutes, Mr. Burnam had no recollection of anything that was taking place. Respiration became deeper and slower. Four minutes after taking the poison, cold douche was freely employed, and more solution of sulphate of iron with spirits of ammonia administered. Vomiting took place; a slight convulsive shudder occurred; the cold effusion was persevered in, with the occasional administration of spirits of ammonia. In twenty minutes he began to exhibit signs of returning consciousness. In about fifteen minutes later, he was able to walk up stairs to bed. Perfect recovery took place. The patient was about sixty years of age, and of a strong constitution.

By chemical analysis, Mr. W. H. Burnam found that the quantity of the acid which his father had taken contained 2.4 grains of anhydrous acid. Mr. Burnam observes, that this is the largest recorded quantity taken, and followed by recovery. It is also a matter of interest in this case, that the time at which insensibility came on is so exactly known, viz. two minutes after the poison was swallowed.

63. *Upon the Legal and Social Rights of Malformed Beings.*—Dr. J. BIERBAUM states that all imperfectly developed beings may be divided into monstrosities and the malformed. Under the term monstrosity, the author understands only those who cannot maintain individual existence when separated from the mother, and whose death is therefore occasioned by birth. The malformed, on the other hand, can enter upon life in spite of their imperfect development, even although the term of existence should not be long. Lawyers make a distinction between monsters and partenta, or ostenta. The former are born of a woman, but possess no human head, rather that of some lower animal, and hence are regarded as scarcely human. Portenta, or ostenta, are those having, indeed, a human head, but imperfectly developed or deformed. To this class belong all those beings with badly formed organs of generation, or with an abnormal number of limbs. Such beings acquire not only the rights which belong to men, but entail, when they die, the same rights upon others. The first glance will show that such an arrangement leads to fallacies and difficult questions. Every sort of monstrosity has a right to baptism if it lives. The canon law which deprives monsters, the produce of intercourse with beasts (!), of baptism, admits of the following formula in doubtful cases: "Si tu es homo te baptizo." When twins are united together by some bond of attachment,